

PROPOSAL: The Soviet Union may have the power at this time to end the superpower arms race, by making "an offer that the US cannot refuse." It could do so by linking a proposal for a bilateral freeze on the testing, production and deployment of any new nuclear weapons (which would preclude the deployment of Pershing or cruise missiles, among others) with an offer to destroy SS-4, SS-5 and SS-20 missiles down to a level that would be, in fact, acceptable to the European members of NATO: say, 50 SS-20s (with no additions to those stationed in Asia). (Reagan's main public objection to the freeze has been the "imbalance" endangering our allies in Europe).

Thus, Andropov would propose to the U.S. a "package" deal on reducing Soviet theater-level weapons and freezing all others, prior to comprehensive reductions, consisting of the following elements:

1. A bilateral, verifiable, permanent halt on the testing and production and deployment of all nuclear warheads and all vehicles intended primarily for delivery of nuclear warheads.
2. The destruction of all SS-4, SS-5 missiles, and reduction of SS-20s within range of European targets to some figure between 50 and 100, with no redeployment to the East and with destruction of the rest. (Continued testing, and deployment or production of the Pershing, cruise, or the SS-21, 22 or 23 would be banned by the freeze).
3. An immediate moratorium on the flight testing of all nuclear missiles and all warhead testing, and all production and deployment of warheads and missiles, at the onset of negotiations toward a formal, bilateral treaty on a permanent, verifiable freeze.

DISCUSSION:

Reagan would never initiate such a proposal, nor would he welcome it; almost surely, he would prefer to continue a two-sided arms race under current lines. But changes in his political environment just in the last six to nine months may well have made it almost impossible for him to reject such a package. (Even if he did so, stubbornly accepting great political costs, the Soviets would seem to have little to lose by having made the proposal; and such a rejection might be politically effective grounds for a German government to reject or postpone the stationing of missiles on its soil).

Some of these factors are as follows:

- (a) The American constituency supporting the freeze--some 70% of the public--could and almost surely would press Congress into strong support of this offer.
- (b) European governments could show public support for this proposal--as a new suggestion breaking out of the confinement of either strategic or theater weapons talks--without appearing "disloyal" to the Reagan position in the INF negotiations considered separately.
- (c) The Soviets have already indicated, in the UN, their support for a freeze at this time. (They may not be so willing just two years from now, when some Pershings and GLCMs may be deployed, which is why it seems urgent to consider this approach now, even under Reagan, rather than to wait for his successor).
- (d) Although Reagan would undoubtedly prefer to continue the arms race (and his stubbornness on such ideological commitments is great), he would face very serious risks in rejecting this offer, especially when his defense budget is perceived as the major cause of his deficit problem. If he overcame his scruples, he could claim credit for having forced the Soviets to produce a deal "better than the Freeze movement demanded," and protecting and satisfying our European allies. It could win him reelection.

SU Proposal:

--(see comments in USSR: my press conference, and my notes on discussions.)

----"Why should we take any initiative?"
Only if you wish to end the arms race.

There is no need for any new Soviet initiative if: your (SU) aim is only to impress future SU or "objective" historians that yours was not the sole or "main" responsibility for the continuation of the arms race. (Soviet historians would undoubtedly go further: you had no responsibility at all; you "left no stone unturned," spared no ("reasonable") effort, made endless good proposals, etc. This judgment would be all the more sure if they did not know of the following argument.)

[Along these lines: imagine various governments maneuvering before World War I to assure (only) that they would not be held solely responsible for the onset of that war. Would their conduct, indeed, have been very different from what it was? (The controversy, after all, continues). Would the war have been less likely, or less catastrophic?]

Or if (2) your aim is simply to play fairly by the rules of arms control negotiations, as practiced in the last 25 years. (But these rules were mainly determined by the US, i.e. by a power that has never wished to end the arms race, unless on terms that assured permanent US superiority, in the sense of a "balance" that maintained the credibility of US first-use threats.)

Or if (3) your aim is to avoid appearing "weak" (by making concessions, or even serious initiatives) in the eyes of Ronald Reagan, thereby confirming him in his "tough" approach and encouraging him to continue it. (Nothing you do will disconfirm this approach in Reagan's eyes, or persuade him it is not the best approach; he is not seeking, by this approach, an acceptable basis for ending the arms race; he is seeking to continue the arms race. If it is to end, it will not be because RR has been convinced that ending it is in the true, long-term interests of the US: but because it has come to seem a necessity in view of the short-term interests of his Administration, given political realities in the European Alliance and at home.)

Or if (4) ending the arms race has lower priority than:

- (a) maximizing the chance of Reagan's defeat in 1984;
- or (b) prolonging and intensifying conflict and disunity between the European allies and the US, and between the publics and regimes in Europe; toward the ultimate aims of the dissolution of NATO.

- (c) Testing the next generation of weapons: perhaps, cruise missiles; ICBMs of MX accuracy; IRBMs of Pershing accuracy, and thus small warheads; reliable solid-fuel SLBMs; SLBMs of D-5 accuracy; submarines that escape the inhibitions against operational deployment that now limit SU alert status (quieter, perhaps, new bases...whatever will evade US ASW, including changed US/allied relationships...whatever will allow the SU a deterrent force like that of the US); Space warfare capability, including lasers and ABMs; land-based ABMs and antiaircraft and anti-cruise missile technology.

2. notes on Soviet proposals, 30 May 1983

- (d) blocking the deployment of Pershings and cruise in Europe, without making any concessions at all (unless, some reduction in SS-20s, without destruction); with political benefits of various kinds.
- (e) avoiding any hint, in terms of negotiating process, of accepting the status of #2, or of being more eager than the US to end the burdens and risks of the arms race.
- (f) continuing the arms race, and the cold war, for its domestic benefits (in legitimating repression, dominance of the CP, and political/economic dominance of the military and the military production sector, along with continued dominance of Eastern Europe; i.e., the status quo in the Eastern bloc).
- (g) continued military preparations, in non-nuclear forces (backed up by tactical nuclear forces, and counterforce strategic forces) for a more active international role backed up by a new readiness for military intervention: e.g., in the Middle East and Africa.

--The only reason for making the proposal I suggest is if the SU actually desires to end the arms race; and in particular, desires to do so before the deployment of Pershing and the production of the MX. (I.e., if Soviet leaders share my view that these developments are not only highly undesirable in themselves, but would create a situation in which ending the arms race then became close to unattainable, because it would then seem "premature" in the eyes of influential Soviets, less desirable or safe than countering and matching the US developments and demonstrating "will" by doing so). Only that priority and sense of urgency would encourage the SU to undertake an effort, at this point, to end the arms race under Reagan.

(To be sure, the risks of trying this would seem small: except for the risk of increasing the chance of Reagan's reelection. But the effort involves acting outside the operational rules of past "arms control negotiations." Have those rules truly served the Soviet Union all that well? Has its own conduct been validated by results, any more than that of the liberal arms controllers in the US? If so, what does that say about the respective motives and interests?)

--?But can this, or any new proposal really achieve better results than previous ones?"

It is not the case that the Soviet Union has made equivalent, or closely comparable, proposals or initiatives in the past, still less that it has made such moves and they have "failed." No actual measure of partial, selective disarmament has been made by either side, as a unilateral initiative (or even as a result of bilateral agreement!) The closest analogy was the conditional ending of atmospheric testing by the SU in 1958, and that was a success (almost the only one, except for the ABM agreement, in the history of arms control interactions), which was terminated only by the Soviet Union's initiative in 1961. (That Soviet initiative of reopening testing had very strong motivation, in terms of the balance and of the immediate pressures of the Berlin confrontation; yet, was it not clearly a tragic error? Especially in view of the Wall, as "solution" of the Berlin crisis at the same time!)

3. notes on SU proposals

Nor has the Soviet leadership yet proposed an unequivocal, comprehensive Freeze--as that is defined and recognized by the Freeze movement or, say, the Kennedy-Hatfield resolution (minus the Levitas amendment). In particular, no Soviet proposal has clearly called for the bilateral ending of flight testing.

The latest Andropov proposals on INF might call for comparable reductions in SS-20's to that proposed here, but it remains ambiguous. It does not specify a definite quantitative ceiling, nor call for the destruction of any missiles, nor lay out a timetable of destruction. (The proposal here puts a ceiling, at current levels, on SS-20s in Asia, but does not call for reductions there. Though, given the desirability of blocking US calls for production of Pershings, to pose a deterrent to the transfer of SS-20s from Asia to Europe, it might be desirable or necessary to accept a ceiling on overall SS-20s that would imply some reductions, with destruction, of SS-20s in Asia as well).

As for other "unilateral initiatives" by the SU in the past, they amount simply to proposals (which do not even clearly demonstrate SU good faith, given the unwillingness of the various American administrations to end the arms race). The no-first-use declaration is an exception, yet it has not yet been accompanied by any implementation, in the way of reduced readiness for first-use, nor, yet, new manuals on doctrine or changed exercise patterns. (The reduction in tanks, announced as an initiative, is not an exception, given their concurrent replacement by more modern tanks).

--Reagan's determination to continue the arms race, his strong resistance--like that of previous Administrations (if not of all Presidents, say Kennedy or Carter)--to Soviet initiatives that might actually bring about its end, is taken here as a fact, a given of the international environment. It is the premise of the argument here that a new Soviet approach is required, and specifically that the proposal advanced here is necessary. As to whether it might succeed, overcoming this resistance, that possibility rests on several new conditions that now apply: the European antinuclear movement; the US antinuclear movement; and the economic and political pressure of the deficit associated with the US defense budget.

Admittedly, none of these new factors, nor their combination, is looking as strong as it did six months ago: the new government in Bonn, the impending one in England, indicate their limits, and the improvement in the economy in the US has eased the pressure on Reagan and on his defense budget (especcailly in Congress). But even ~~Without~~ these changes, it was questionable that such forces could overcome Reagan's resistance to ending the arms race. That is precisely why a Soviet initiative is necessary. It may or may not be sufficient--there is no guarantee of success--but it would almost surely not be sufficient if these factors did not exist in their current strength. (I.e, a proposal like the present one would have had much less hope of success--probably, not much at all--two years ago. But by the same token, Soviet analysts should be open to the new opportunities for success that are created by these new developments --putting into question and reevalutating doubts and operating principles based on past conditions and experience--as well as the implications of the negative developments that seem (to me) to make such a new approach urgently necessary.)